



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION VIII
1860 LINCOLN STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80295

MAR 19 1985

Ref: 8WM-C

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lee M. Thomas
Administrator

SUBJECT: Mining Wastes

As follow up to the briefing held in Denver on March 6, 1985 I want to review our agreements and suggest some future action items. In the briefing we covered some of the characteristics of various mining wastes and stressed the multimedia nature of mining waste issues. Current Agency activities in mining wastes such as Superfund mining site work, RCRA Mine Waste Report to Congress, and Superfund reauthorization were discussed. It was agreed that a long term perspective needs to be utilized to evaluate future regulatory needs for mining wastes, recognizing the interrelated authorities which exist under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, UIC, RCRA, CERCLA, and the Ground Water Strategy. Because there are regulatory gaps for mining wastes which are creating environmental problems, there is a need for evaluations of existing authorities and development of a mine wastes strategy which lays out regulatory development and statutory changes necessary to regulate environmental problem areas. In order to effectively regulate mining wastes the Agency needs to better utilize its mining waste expertise. The people who understand mining wastes need to be involved in statutory changes and regulatory development. Region VIII can help the national programs in the mining waste area.

As a result of our discussions the Region VIII Mine Wastes Group agreed to work closely with Headquarters staff on the whole spectrum of mining issues. The group's expertise can be utilized for items such as the RCRA Report to Congress, Superfund reauthorization, and Congressional briefings. For the Mine Waste Group's involvement to be effective, the region must know when and where our input is needed. I would like to offer some suggestions as to how this can be accomplished.

Headquarters should develop a functional equivalent to the Mine Waste Group which will serve as a headquarters focal point on mine waste issues. Currently a logical choice for the headquarters coordinator would be the RCRA Mine Waste report to Congress project officer. The headquarters team needs to have a designated representative from various programs and as a minimum the offices represented should include OPPE, OGC, ORD, Office of Ground Water and the RCRA and Superfund programs including OWPE. Individual representatives would be responsible for keeping the headquarters coordinator aware of the

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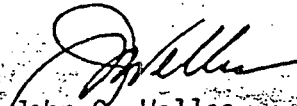
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status of mining issues in their respective programs. The headquarters coordinator would be responsible for keeping the Regional Work Group chairman aware of all legislative, regulatory, and other headquarters activities. The headquarters coordinator and the Mine Waste Group chairman should work together to solicit input and representation from other regions. Once a need for specific input has been identified, the Mine Waste Group can work directly with the various program offices. In addition to providing a mechanism for information exchange, the headquarters team can provide a forum to discuss multimedia issues related to mining waste. We feel that this type of network is necessary because historic exchange of information between programs in headquarters and between headquarters and the regions on mining wastes has not occurred. Specific individuals need to be responsible for providing input as well as a high enough priority being placed on this activity to insure that the team can function. It is further recommended that the Office of the Administrator maintain management oversight over the team so that priorities, direction, and control can be adjusted as necessary.

I will be looking forward to your comments on the suggested approach and will be glad to work with you on further details as necessary. In the interim, if there are any specific questions from headquarters staff or a need for input on mine wastes please have them contact the Mine Waste Group Chairman, Rob Walline at FTS 564-1596.



John G. Welles
Regional Administrator
Region VIII

cc: Ms. Carolyn Clinton (A-101)

Regional Administrators, Regions I - X

